



# Casualty and Memorial Affairs Operations Center CASUALTY ASSISTANCE OFFICER TRAINING

Casualty and Memorial Affairs  
Operations Center

# PURPOSE

To provide Casualty Assistance  
Officers  
(CAO) with the training necessary to  
ensure  
they provide the servicemember's  
next of kin  
the best assistance possible

# OBJECTIVES OF CASUALTY ASSISTANCE

- Assist the NOK during the period immediately following a soldier being declared missing or deceased.
- Take care of “the HEARTS” of the NOK
- Eliminate delays in settling claims and paying survivor benefits
- Assist the NOK in resolving other personnel-related matters

# CASUALTY ASSISTANCE OFFICER

- CAO represents the Secretary of the Army
- Officer/Warrant Officer or Senior NCO
- CAO will be equal in grade to that of the casualty and/or to the NOK that assistance is being provided
- CAO will be released from all conflicting duties/responsibilities

# WHO RECEIVES ASSISTANCE?

## **The NOK of:**

- Active duty military
- USAR/ARNG enroute to/from/participating in Active Duty Training (AT, ADT, FTNGD, IADT, ADSW, SADT, TTAD or IDT)
- Soldiers in AWOL status
- Army retirees
- Soldiers separated from the Army within 120 days
- DA civilian employees OCONUS & CONUS TDY
- DA dependents OCONUS

# Preparation for CAO Duties

- Be prepared to assist the family during their greatest time of need
- Treat the family as you would like your family treated; give them your full attention
- There is more to being a good CAO than completing the paperwork; take care of their hearts.
- The NOK's lasting view of the Army will be based on the service you provide

# PHASES OF CAO DUTIES

- PHASE I - Period from notification to burial
- PHASE II - Period from burial through approximately 90 days from burial

# PRIOR TO INITIAL CONTACT

- Review circumstances surrounding casualty incident
- Discuss case with casualty notifier
- Review Chapter 6, AR 600-8-1
- View Casualty Assistance Videos
- Review Casualty Assistance Officer Guide For The Casualty Assistance Officer
- Prepare a DA Form 5516 (Casualty Assistance Referral Card)
- Obtain a copy of DA Pam 608-4 and DA Pam 600-5
- Obtain information on status of remains



# INITIAL CONTACT

- Call the NOK within 24 hours after notification
- Never state that you have been appointed to assist them
- Inquire about immediate problems
- Arrange first visit
- Advise PADD to delay making funeral arrangements pending briefing on funeral benefit options

# THE FIRST VISIT

- Wear a Class A Uniform
  - Class B Uniform on all subsequent visits
- Initial visit should be brief -- to determine immediate needs
- Confirm 45 day address and other pertinent data
- Inform NOK of Death Gratuity payment
- Advise PNOK of status of remains
- Disposition of Remains -- DA Form 7302-R
- Never make a promise you can't keep
- Make an appointment to discuss funeral desires for the following day
- Present DA Form 5516 (Casualty Assistance Referral Card) to the PNOK along with appropriate DA Pam

# THE SECOND VISIT

Limit Business to the Following:

- If not already paid, deliver the Death Gratuity check
- Ensure the DA Form 7302-R has been completed
- Assist PADD in determining funeral desires
- Answer only specific questions you are qualified to comment on -- Do not speculate

# BEFORE THE FUNERAL

- Visit the PNOK regularly to keep them completely informed
- Make preliminary funeral plans, but don't set date until you have confirmed shipping date for remains
- Finalize funeral arrangements with PNOK after remains arrive
- Ensure that flag(s)/awards cases are available for presentation
- Escort NOK to funeral home when Funeral Director is ready

# THE FUNERAL

- You will attend the funeral wearing your Class A Uniform
- Degree of involvement depends on desires of PNOK
- Go over sequence of events with NOK
- Coordinate with Burial Detail/Funeral Director
- Present Lapel Button
- Make every effort to fulfill PADD's funeral desires

# AFTER THE FUNERAL

- Schedule appointment to visit PNOK two days after funeral
- Encourage PNOK to review DA Pam 608-4 and/or 600-5
- Be knowledgeable and able to converse on benefits and entitlements
  - Unpaid pay and allowances
  - Veterans Affairs
  - Social Security
  - State Benefits
  - Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP)

# APPLICATION FOR BENEFITS/ENTITLEMENTS

- Present detailed information on benefits and entitlements
- Assist NOK in filing for benefits and entitlements
  - Escort NOK to VA and Social Security Administration
- Assist NOK in obtaining a new ID card
- Assist NOK in preparing correspondence to request reports of investigation
- Use DA Form 2204-R as a checklist
- Follow through to ensure all benefits/entitlements are received

# FOLLOW UP VISITS

- Provide NOK a copy of the TAPS brochure
- Complete DA Form 2204-R and forward to CAC NLT 120 days after case assignment
- Follow through on any matter not completed
- Provide further assistance as requested
- Ensure PNOK is furnished with CAC telephone number and knows how to obtain further assistance



# RESPONDING TO THE MEDIA

- If you or family you are assisting does not wish to respond to the media, refer the reporters to the local installation PAO
- Limit your response to discussion of your duties as the CAO
  - Avoid discussion of circumstances surrounding the soldier's death,  
military operations or policies
- Protection of the family's privacy is your primary concern
- Ensure that the family members are aware of their rights concerning the media
- Alert PAO is media attention is anticipated
- Avoid discussing anything that you are not qualified to comment on
- If in doubt, avoid comment

# CONCLUSION

- Do not wait for a call to begin getting ready
  - Class A Uniform must be ready
  - Read the CAO guide and become thoroughly familiar with its contents
  - Review AR 600-8-1, Chapter six and appendices E thru U
- The more prepared you are, the less stressful your duty will be
- BE READY TO GO!!!

"There's no more effective way of creating bitter enemies of the Army than by failing to do everything we can possibly do in a time of bereavement, nor is there a more effective way of making friends for the Army than by showing We are personally interested in every casualty which occurs

**GENERAL OF THE ARMY  
GEORGE C. MARSHALL  
ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF  
1944**